



A Message from
Mayor Sharpe James

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**MAYOR SHARPE JAMES
STATEMENT ON AUTO THEFT
SEPTEMBER 8, 1992**



Together we can make a difference!

TODAY WE MEET DURING CRISIS HOURS IN OUR CITY, COUNTY, STATE AND NATION. TODAY, WE MEET TO PLAN STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN NEW JERSEY'S LARGEST CITY AND TO ADDRESS AUTO THEFT WHICH UNFORTUNATELY HAS REACHED EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS IN OUR CITY, THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, THE STATE AND THIS NATION.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, AUTO THEFT DID NOT ORIGINATE IN THE CITY OF NEWARK. NOR IS IT A PROBLEM EXPERIENCED BY NEWARK ALONE. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE BEEN IN THE EYES OF THE STORM AND MORE RECENTLY, NEWARK HAS BEEN SINGLED OUT AS THE AUTO THEFT CAPITAL OF THE NATION. A TITLE AND LIFESTYLE THAT WE ARE NOT PROUD OF, NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT AUTO THEFT HAS BECOME A PROBLEM FOR EVERY URBAN CITY IN AMERICA. WE NEED ONLY TO REVIEW STATISTICS COMPILED BY THE NATIONAL AUTO THEFT BUREAU FOR 1989 AND 1990 TO REALIZE THIS GROWING URBAN PROBLEM.

<u>CITY</u>	<u>NUMBER OF THEFTS</u>	
	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>
NEW YORK CITY	133,861	147,123
LOS ANGELES	63,991	63,613
CHICAGO	45,898	48,620
HOUSTON	40,853	37,005
DETROIT	30,376	28,123
DALLAS	27,299	24,513
PHILADELPHIA	25,043	25,868
SAN DIEGO	25,583	24,245

<u>CITY</u>	<u>NUMBER OF THEFTS</u>	
	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>
PHOENIX	12,705	17,520
SAN ANTONIO	15,263	14,879
NEWARK	15,674	14,777

THE ROOT CAUSES AND SOLUTION TO AUTO THEFT ARE CORRECTLY SO BEING DISCUSSED HERE AND ACROSS THIS NATION BY PARENTS, YOUTH GROUPS, SCHOOL OFFICIALS, COMMUNITY LEADERS, THE CLERGY, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, GOVERNMENT AND OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

CLEARLY, THERE IS NO EASY SOLUTION OR QUICK FIX TO A PROBLEM THAT TRANSCENDS POVERTY, EDUCATION, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PARITY IN ACHIEVING THE AMERICAN DREAM.

HERE IN THE CITY OF NEWARK WE WILL CONTINUE TO ENHANCE AND EXPAND OUR RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL OFFERINGS FOR THE YOUNG AND OLD. YET, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL THE CITY OF NEWARK TOLERATE THE DISRESPECTFUL, IRRESPONSIBLE, LAWLESSNESS AND ENDANGERING OF LIVES FROM AUTO THEFT CRIMINALS WITHIN OUR BOUNDARIES.

MOREOVER, WE WILL NOT ACCEPT THE FALSEHOOD OF POVERTY AND "NOTHING TO DO" AS AN EXCUSE FOR A LIFESTYLE OF CRIME, DRUGS AND AUTO THEFT. JUVENILE OFFENDERS AND PARENTS MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

PAGE 3

DURING THESE CRISIS HOURS, WE MUST END A DANGEROUS, PERMISSIVE AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BELIEF BY SOME THAT IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR OUR CHILDREN TO STEAL CARS AND RISK LIVES IN THE DISGUISE OF RECREATION OR AS A NEW SPORT. AN INTELLIGENT PERSON SHOULD AGREE THAT WE SHOULD NOT PUT OUR CHILDREN AT RISK WHILE SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO A DIFFICULT SOCIAL PROBLEM.

ALSO, AND I WISH TO BE CLEAR IN THIS MESSAGE, WE DO NOT VIEW JAIL AS A SOLUTION, NOR DO WE WISH TO SEE SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN INCARCERATED. HOWEVER, WE SIMPLY CANNOT RETURN TO THE DAYS OF THE WILD WEST AND ALLOW INDIVIDUALS TO DO WHATEVER THEY WANT TO DO BASED ON HOW FAST THEY ARE WITH A GUN OR HOW FAST THEY CAN STEAL AND DRIVE A CAR.

IN A CIVILIZED SOCIETY WE CAN NOT ALLOW INDIVIDUALS TO CONTINUE TO INJURE OR KILL THEMSELVES OR TO INJURE AND KILL INNOCENT BYSTANDERS BECAUSE OF WILD, RECKLESS AND OUT OF CONTROL DRIVING OF A STOLEN AUTO. SOME OF OUR YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS CAN'T EVEN SEE OVER THE WHEEL OF THE CAR THEY ARE DRIVING.

CLEARLY THEN, STEALING AN AUTO IS MORE THAN A MISDEMEANOR OFFENSE AND CHRONIC AND FLAGRANT OFFENDERS SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM SOCIETY WHERE THEY CAN DO NO HARM TO THEMSELVES AND OTHERS. YOU MIGHT ASK WHO ARE THESE CHRONIC AND FLAGRANT OFFENDERS WHO SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM OUR STREETS AND HIGHWAYS. ONE OF THE OFFENDERS THAT WAS

PAGE 4

ARRESTED WAS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION WITH AN EYE AND HAND COORDINATION DISABILITY. I AM SAD TO REPORT THAT HE CRASHED THE VEHICLE THAT HE STOLE.

THEY ARE THE CHRONIC AND FLAGRANT OFFENDERS WHO KILLED THREE SISTERS ON SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE WHO WERE GOING HOME FROM WORK. NOW A SURVIVING GRANDMOTHER MUST RAISE ALL OF THEIR CHILDREN. CHRONIC AND FLAGRANT OFFENDERS WHO INJURED A SIX MONTH OLD CHILD AND FIVE OTHERS WHEN A STOLEN AUTO CRASHED INTO A TAXI, THROWING THE OCCUPANTS FROM THE TAXI UPON IMPACT ON CLINTON AVENUE AND SOUTH SEVENTEENTH STREET.

CHRONIC AND FLAGRANT OFFENDERS WHO KILLED A TWO YEAR OLD GIRL AND INJURED THREE OTHERS WHEN THEIR STOLEN AUTO STRUCK DOWN HER FAMILY ON THE SIDEWALK AT SOUTH SEVENTH STREET AND FIFTEENTH AVENUE. CHRONIC AND FLAGRANT OFFENDERS WHO KILLED A TWENTY YEAR OLD SETON HALL UNIVERSITY CO-ED ON HER WAY HOME AT TWELFTH AVENUE AND SOUTH NINTH STREET.

I COULD GO ON AND ON ABOUT LOSS OF LIFE, INJURY AND DAMAGE TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY BY THOSE STEALING AUTOS. IT IS A SAD CHAPTER FOR OUR CITY WITH NO WINNERS. A CHAPTER THAT WE MUST CLOSE.

TODAY WE CALL UPON YOU TO JOIN WITH US IN SEEKING SHORT AND LONG

PAGE 5

TERM SOLUTIONS TO THIS AUTO THEFT CANCER. TODAY WE CALL ON YOU TO JOIN WITH US FOR BETTER TOMORROWS, FOR A BETTER CITY AND A BETTER AMERICA. BY WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE INCIDENTS OF AUTO THEFTS IN OUR CITY. BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN WIN THE BATTLE!

END WITH A QUOTE FROM LANGSTON HUGHES.